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A Call for an Official Naval Doctrine

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THE UNITED STATES NAVY NEEDS an official doctrine, now more than ever. Ten years ago, the Navy adopted its revolutionary Maritime Strategy; it was well suited for the 1980s, but its importance has diminished in proportion to the former Soviet threat. Global change, new technology, and fiscal constraints now demand the Navy take its next step. In order for it to incorporate successfully the changes necessary to face the combat realities of tomorrow, fundamental reassessments must be made today.

Although much has been written about doctrine, almost none of it is from a naval perspective. This article seeks to determine why, and it begins by looking at U.S. Army doctrine and the foundation it has provided that service in recent years. It then examines the difference inherent in land and sea power, and offers an appreciation of why the Navy approaches doctrine differently.

As this article then makes plain, powerful figures and convincing arguments loom on both sides of the naval doctrine debate. Yet both generally agree it will take more than traditional thinking and new technology to prevail in the future. As demonstrated in the ground war against Saddam Hussein, Army doctrine proved extremely successful under fire. The Navy needs exactly such a foundation. Change demands new ideas, new assumptions, new approaches, but only doctrine can channel them into a comprehensive way of thinking—and fighting. Despite the enormously difficult challenge, the Navy must develop an official doctrine. Only then can it adequately and efficiently prepare for the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Doctrine Defined

Doctrine can be summed up in three words: how to fight. This basic concept inspires a wide range of definitions, but it is best described as a "set of beliefs based on historic precedent that forms a framework for military action." It is not, however, a "statement of national policy or even military strategy."[1] Our *Basic National Defense Doctrine* (Joint Pub 0-1) calls it "an accepted body of

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professional knowledge . . . [that] comprises fundamental principles by which the military forces or elements thereof guide their actions in support of national objectives. . . . Fundamentally, the purpose of doctrine is to aid thinking—not to replace it."[2] Doctrine is, therefore, dynamic, not static. It is continually affected by theory, technology, trial and error, and even by individual efforts to improve the profession of arms. In recent years, the Army has led the development and practice of military doctrine.

AirLand Battle. General Frederick M. Franks, Jr., commanding general of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, remarks, "Doctrine determines how we fight, what forces look like, how they train, how they will be equipped and what we expect of our leaders."[3] He strongly urges the need for doctrine to lead the way, to be responsive as threats change, and to evolve rather than stand still. In its basic warfighting manual, *Operations* (FM 100-5), the Army did just that, laying out a solid, new approach to maneuver warfare. Called AirLand Battle (ALB) doctrine, it held that four basic factors generate and apply combat power: initiative, agility, depth, and synchronization.

FM 100-5 also notes that "to be useful, doctrine must be uniformly known and understood."[4] This can be achieved only by "ensuring that the Army in general, and individual soldiers in particular, understand and accept the general principles from which they operate."[5] Consequently, the Army put ALB doctrine into practice at every level, teaching and testing it in the professional education system and implementing it in combat exercises. But the ultimate test came during Operation Desert Storm, where textbook execution of ALB doctrine principles "clearly outclassed the plodding tactics of the Iraqis, who had been taught by Soviet instructors."[6]

AirLand Battle Operations. In keeping with the evolutionary nature of this process, the Army has reevaluated ALB and is moving on to a new generation of doctrine called AirLand Operations (ALO). In preparing for the more fluid and deadly battlefields of the future, experts predict AirLand Operations doctrine will use to advantage the quality of our equipment and the competence of our professional force to create a nonlinear battlefield where . . . [ALO's] cycle of disperse, mass, fight, redisperse and reconstitute appears to reduce the risk of the grinding attrition battle.[7] *Military Review* (the journal of the Army's Command and General Staff College) reports this new doctrine is "designed to thrust the Army into the 21st century and to meet the needs of an army facing a multipolar world order and multidimensional threat, while considering the underlying realities of force and resource reductions."[8]

Given the importance the Army places on doctrine, AirLand Operations will have a major impact on our future ground forces and their equipment, and we will ultimately be better prepared for the next conflict. As the Army has

demonstrated, doctrine—not military failure—must drive the process. Even though its missions may be very different, this doctrinal foundation is just as critical for the Navy.

The Navy's Approach

Where the Army has a doctrinally driven approach, the Navy has seemingly taken an altogether different path. This is due mainly to a number of conceptual differences in the way armies and navies view warfare.

Conceptual Differences. Traditionally, navies tend to think in terms of strategy, while armies think in terms of doctrine. In his classic work, *Military Strategy*, Rear Admiral J.C. Wylie, renowned strategic theorist and former President of the Naval War College, attributes this fact to the connotations of the word "strategy," which are not the same for a soldier, a sailor, or an airman. Specifically, "Where the sailor or airman thinks in terms of an entire world, the soldier at work thinks in terms of theaters, in terms of campaigns, or in terms of battles. . . . Where the sailor and the airman are almost forced, by the nature of the sea and the air, to think in terms of a total world or, at the least, to look outside the physical limits of their immediate concerns, the soldier is almost literally hemmed in by his terrain."[9]

The sailor, in approaching war, does not encounter the same limitations as the soldier. The sailor views war more as a separate series of encounters or contacts; these contacts are "tactical" operations, and everything else is considered "strategic." Conversely, the soldier sees operations as being tied more to the theater, with actions in-theater mainly "tactical" and anything above that level "strategic."[10] Over time, these perceptions have created divergent views on the concepts of strategy, doctrine, and operational art. Sailors, soldiers, and now airmen simply use and understand the terms differently.

Noted author on military logistics, strategy, and theory Rear Admiral Henry E. Eccles captured the essence of naval strategy when he described a strategic concept as "a verbal statement of: what to control, for what purpose, to what degree, when to initiate control, how long to control, and in general, how to control in order to achieve the strategic objective."[11]

The objective is the critical point here, but objectives themselves also tend to be perceived differently by soldiers and sailor. As another maritime strategy expert, Colin Gray, points out, "armies most often have occupation (or possession) goals, while navies have use or denial-of-use goals. . . . In contrast to the land, the sea is a medium of movement. It cannot be occupied and fortified."[12] These fundamental differences between armies and navies have created "two reasonably distinct 'cultures,' whose mutual comprehension has left much to be desired."[13]

Gray also notes a number of enduring geopolitical differences between the land and the sea: "The natural condition of the land is to be politically controlled. The natural condition of the sea, in sharp contrast, is to be uncontrolled. States seek to control the open seas in order to affect or influence what is happening on the land."[14] These geopolitical differences then shape the operations of both soldier and sailor. Soldiers are much more dependent than sailors on others to guard their rear areas and their flanks, to transport them, and protect from the air and the sea. To do their job best, they prefer to control those forces supporting them. The sailor, however, less dependent on others, feels he can best accomplish his maritime mission and subsequently support the land war without intrusion by the other services.[15] These operational differences must be considered in any discussion of war on land or at sea.

Naval freedom of action has dominated Western maritime thinking for centuries. Unable in the past to communicate with either military or political superiors once out of sight of land, naval officers have traditionally relied on their professional judgment, authority, and autonomy to accomplish their missions. This freedom of action, coupled with the inherent flexibility and mobility of naval forces, is still the foundation for present-day maritime strategy. On the other hand, though decentralized control and autonomous operations may work well for a navy, this is rarely the case for a large, slower moving, terrain-restricted army. Inasmuch as a certain unitary approach to authority still dominates the Navy from quarterdeck to bureau chief, there has traditionally been little room for the collective, coordinated approach characterized by Army staff arrangements.[16]

These different tactical, operational, and geographical factors have produced two separate theories of warfare, which have never been successfully reconciled. One focuses on land power theory and destruction of the enemy (Jomini and Clausewitz), while the other deals with maritime strategy and control of the sea to project power onto land (Mahan and Corbett). Such intellectual underpinnings of service autonomy must first be understood before engaging in any discussion concerning service doctrines.[17]

Maritime Strategy. Given these conceptual differences, the Navy has dealt little with doctrine at the service level. Instead, it has relied on the fundamental naval principles of Mahan and Corbett and, since the early 1980s, on what is known as the Maritime Strategy. The Maritime Strategy was developed in response to a request from the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral William N. Small. He realized the Navy needed to restate its rationale and strategy to justify the naval expansion of the 1980s.[18] The strategy focused mainly on the global Soviet threat and was identified as the naval component of the National Military Strategy. It set forth three phases.

The first dealt with deterrence in crisis situations that could involve superpower confrontation. It also involved the transition of naval forces to a wartime footing should deterrence fail. The second phase called for seizing the initiative and establishing maritime superiority over the Soviets. The third continued the destruction of the Soviet fleet begun in phase two by aggressively carrying the fight to the enemy. The ultimate goal of the Maritime Strategy was to use maritime power, in concert with the other services, to terminate the war on terms favorable to the United States and our allies.[19]

The Maritime Strategy was well received in Congress and throughout the U.S. Navy. It stimulated a resurgence in strategic thinking and led to many heated debates over the role and use of maritime power. In the ten years since it first appeared, "a virtual avalanche of articles, books and papers were produced which used the Maritime Strategy to justify weapons systems, develop operational concepts, rework operational plans to defend geographical theaters and apply the concepts to operations with allied navies."[20] In many ways, the Maritime Strategy did accomplish much of what doctrine has done for the Army.

The Way Ahead. Just as doctrine must evolve to be useful, however, so too must the Maritime Strategy. As we move into the post-Cold War era and focus beyond the former Soviet Union, our emphasis must also shift to maintaining global stability. In his 1991 article, "The Way Ahead," H. Lawrence Garrett III, then Secretary of the Navy, posed this dilemma: "What do we do with a maritime strategy formulated during the Cold War, focused primarily on global conflict with the Soviet Union? The answer: we extract the strategy's enduring principles, and apply them to current planning. The maritime strategy itself remains on the shelf . . . ready to be retrieved if a global threat should reemerge."[21]

Of those enduring principles, three have been previously identified by the Navy:

- Forward peacetime naval presence remains essential for deterrence and rapid crisis response.
- Naval force structure must mirror the objectives and requirements that naval policy dictates.
- Naval warfighting doctrine based on operational experience remains valid at any level of conflict, should deterrence fail.[22]

But just what is naval warfighting doctrine? Given the inherent differences between land and sea warfare, does the Maritime Strategy suffice, or should the Navy reach a formal consensus on just what its doctrine is? These issues form the basis for the debate surrounding the call for an official naval doctrine.

The Debate

As the unchallenged maritime power of the seas with over two hundred years of naval tradition to rely on, does the U.S. Navy really need a doctrine? All three

sister services have them, yet the Navy does not. There are in fact several arguments supporting the status quo; they are not, however, entirely convincing.

Maritime Strategy is Equivalent to Doctrine. The Maritime Strategy, as noted, fulfilled many of the same functions as ALB doctrine did for the Army. It was extremely effective in countering the Soviet threat and acting as a concept of operations. The problem now arises with the disappearance of that threat. Without a clear and present danger upon which to focus public and naval opinion, to develop a non-specific strategy to handle a non-specific or even unpredictable threat would be extremely difficult. Ultimately, the Navy would have a tough time defending and supporting any such strategy.[23]

The service must also deal with planning assumptions that are fundamentally different from those dictated by the former Soviet Union. Since most of our future threat is predicted to come from Third World countries, few of those old assumptions will remain useful.[24] The report of a recent naval force capabilities planning effort pointed out that although "another nation and navy may someday rise to test our resolve on the high seas, our focus will shift from blue water, open ocean operations to the littorals, choke points, and sea lines of communication that could be contested by a small, yet potent navy. In balancing requirements we will place more emphasis on shallow water mine and anti-submarine warfare, operating in confined and congested waters, and in conducting operations in waters adjacent to land threats. Our current weapons systems are largely optimized for use against a blue water opponent, and the naval force that is optimized for the open ocean environment is not necessarily best equipped to venture into areas that preclude sea room and deep water."[25]

Systems, tactics, and people must all be prepared to fight in green as well as blue waters. Doctrine, not strategy, is the bridge that binds these three elements into combat capability. Strategy, whether theater-specific or more global, is then developed in an iterative process based on that doctrine. Otherwise, we risk creating a strategy that will not succeed. Just as policy drives strategy, so too must doctrine, as an integral part of the entire process.

Naval Doctrine Is Implied. Many argue that the U.S. Navy does in fact have a doctrine—an implied one. The mission of the Navy has been clearly defined by Congress, and a number of functions flow from it, such as sea control and power projection. These functions, in turn, define the type of doctrine the service should follow. The Navy also relies on a set of corporate beliefs and traditions concerning naval warfare to select consciously certain concepts that are well matched to capabilities.[26] Rear Admiral Joseph C. Strasser, President of the Naval War College, is convinced that there is actually more doctrine in the Navy than one might think—that in fact the "elements are there, but it's just not called doctrine." As he points out, "doctrine tends to imply a barrier to flexibility and

mobility." Since these are two fundamentals of naval power, it is understandable why Admiral Strasser says "the Navy just has an aversion to calling it doctrine."[27]

A recent paper written at the Naval War College tried to identify these implied naval principles by analyzing the Maritime Strategy, fleet commander fighting instructions, and specific volumes of the Naval Warfare Publications series. The following list of "Fundamental Principles of Naval Doctrine" was extracted from those fleet documents:[28]

- Mass: defense in depth, mutual support, and carrier battle group organization.
- Concentration of firepower: massing of strike assets, unified command structure, coordinated fire, and reliable information management.
- Preemption, or "striking effectively first": strategic and tactical offensive posture (surprise, dislocation, and disruption), counterdetection technique, and speed and maneuver.
- Decentralized execution: preplanned responses, realistic training, doctrinal simplicity, survivability and self-defense, and independence from sophisticated command, control, communications, and intelligence systems.
- Overwhelming force: sea supremacy, technological superiority, and superior training, readiness, and personnel.

The comprehensiveness of these implied principles and the success of tactical doctrine suggest that perhaps an official naval doctrine is simply not necessary. On the other hand, mission, functions, and principles do not readily equate to doctrine. The difficulty comes in determining how best to integrate them. This could actually be called the commonsense approach to doctrine. Given the "what," one expects common sense to dictate the "how," based on fundamental naval principles. This assumption is extremely dangerous, especially in view of Clausewitz's assertion that "everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult."[29] Perhaps doctrine is nothing more than common sense for the Great Captains of this world; however, as the principal author of U.S. Marine Corps directive FMFM 1, *Warfighting*, correctly points out, "Certainly, such men are among us today. But we should not deceive ourselves; they are very few. What about the rest of us not gifted with the same clarity of vision?"[30]

In *Warfighting*, the Marines simply put together a cohesive and official doctrine to raise the general level of competence of the average soldier. They tried "to give the rest of us the same opportunity for success by formalizing what the geniuses have known all along."[31] This is the real key to doctrine, creating a baseline of thought on how to fight for the average service member. Such official guidance can then be changed or updated as required by new technology, tactics, or threats. It can be professionally debated and rationally discussed so as to better prepare service personnel as well as to improve doctrine. Moreover, "every doctrine, every technique, and every weapon needs the scrutiny of fresh

minds."[32] As Albert Einstein said, "The important thing is not to stop questioning."

Universal Truths May Be Dangerous. Although a set of universal maritime truths may be created, they may be pointless or even dangerous if improperly used or misunderstood. Specifically, universal principles could be dangerous if they encourage "the dogmatic and inflexible attitudes so harmful to the sea-officer, whose object, said Nelson, was 'to embrace the happy moment which now and then offers.' "[33] In other words, strict adherence to doctrine could tie one's hands at sea, where rapidly taking advantage of opportunity is often vital.

Historically, this has not been the case, nor has it been accepted as so by past military writers. The Germans, in fact, demonstrated the true flexibility of doctrine with their overwhelming defeat of the French at Sedan in 1940. Their doctrine emphasized "mobility, maneuver and flexibility," and it granted subordinate commanders "the discretion to amend their orders to take advantage of circumstances."[34] The consequence of this flexibility was monumental, as "the Germans, adjusting their plan to exploit minute-to-minute developments in the fighting, and able to communicate far better than the French, outmaneuvered and outthought their adversaries, who often had to make decisions based on information that was old and therefore useless."[35]

Doctrine must be applied using sound judgment, but not as if it were law. Good doctrine should clarify rather than confuse. It should expand knowledge and options rather than limit them. Most military writers have maintained the existence of fundamental naval principles of war, but just as fire can be used properly or destructively, so too can these principles. Simply because they may be abused or misused does not mean they are of no value. Even Mahan said naval strategy was based on fundamental truths which, "when correctly formulated, are rightly called principles," and that "these truths when ascertained, are in themselves unchangeable."[36] Clausewitz was not one for listing principles of war, but he also acknowledged there are times when the "arch of truth culminates in such a keystone. . . . [These] principles and rules are intended to provide a thinking man with a frame of reference for the movements he has been trained to carry out, rather than to serve as a guide which at the moment of action lays down precisely the path he must take."[37]

Principles are merely tools for the thinking professional. Doctrine should provide the frame of reference in which we think about using those tools properly. It is not a checklist for action. When used dogmatically, doctrine can be dangerous. But doctrine is not dangerous when trained minds apply it using judgment and logical thought.

Naval Warfare Is Too Complex for Simple Rules. This argument claims that the conditions of naval warfare, especially for a global navy, are just too complex,

diverse, and unpredictable for any simple set of rules to govern them.[38] No single doctrine could possibly address such diverse forms of air, land, and sea warfare as the U.S. Navy employs, with its many maritime missions and weapon systems. Admiral Wylie emphasizes that the Navy has a "requirement to adapt, to a greater degree than the other services, to unexpected situations," and "that's why it's so difficult to plan."[39] He also strongly agrees with Admiral Strasser that any doctrine would, consequently, be too restrictive.

If this could be labeled the "too hard to do" argument, the reply might be that the other services have already done it. Each has developed doctrines to keep pace with a wide range of technologies and threats. If taken at face value, the "too hard" argument would have invalidated the Maritime Strategy from the start. On the contrary, complex warfare problems and tasks are exactly what good doctrine should address. The real challenge is to meet future contingencies and to use available assets creatively, optimally, and decisively.

This is exactly the challenge the Navy faces in the '90s as the emphasis shifts to global stability. Greater demands will push each service to its absolute limit. For instance, the U.S. Navy had never planned to use more than three or four carrier battle groups together, even against the Soviets—yet in Desert Storm, six were employed, of which four even operated in the restricted waters of the Persian Gulf, an idea never previously contemplated. The services will be forced to continue making fundamental reassessments such as these, many involving assumptions and policies in place since World War II.[40] These uncertainties only reemphasize the Navy's need for doctrine.

The Case for Official Naval Doctrine

JCS Guidance. One Navy responsibility listed in the Joint Staff document *Unified Action Armed Forces* (JCS Pub 0-2) is to develop "doctrines, procedures, tactics, and techniques employed by service forces."[41] Each of the services must develop doctrines for their forces, as this guidance makes clear. Nevertheless, the Navy has not done so, unless it interprets "doctrines" to mean only tactical doctrines. When considered in light of the previously discussed inherent cultural and intellectual barriers between the services, this disparity could greatly affect the success of joint operations. Consequently, *Basic National Defense Doctrine* (Joint Pub 0-1) states one premise of the joint doctrine system is that "commanders are responsible for unifying military effort based on doctrine and the requirements of the situation confronting them."[42] As JCS Pub 0-2 similarly postulates, "Common doctrines are essential for mutual understanding and confidence between a command and assigned subordinates, and among the subordinates themselves, so that timely and effective action will be taken by all concerned in the absence of specific instructions."[43]

The Joint Staff, then, is rightfully convinced that common doctrine, mutual understanding, and confidence all influence the operational employment of combat forces, the "bottom line" in any military organization.

More Joint Operations. Our failed Iranian hostage rescue attempt at Desert One in 1980 provided a sobering example of what can result when communication and coordination breaks down under the fog and friction of war. Our 1983 Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada, although successful, uncovered similar shortcomings. Former Secretary of the Navy John F. Lehman considered "the undue complications of jointness" to be one of three basic reasons why that operation was more difficult than anticipated.[44] The congressional investigations prompted by these operations eventually led to the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act, which forced the military to redress these shortcomings. Realistically, we can only expect to see more emphasis on such joint approaches in the future. A recent article in *Airpower Journal*, the professional journal of the U.S. Air Force, put it this way: "Joint doctrine is here to stay. Once the factors inhibiting the development of joint doctrine are overcome, we will have the most effective armed service possible in a time of decreasing resources."[45] Instead of dragging our feet over the "undue complications of jointness," we must work through these problems as soon as possible.

The Navy needs a doctrine that will address a number of key issues, especially in this area of joint operations. One highly important and specific shortfall can be found in the guidance on the employment of carrier-based airpower in Third World contingencies. Current fleet operating instructions simply do not give enough importance to gaining and maintaining air supremacy over the land using carrier-based aircraft. They do not even mention the importance of strategic air operations and air interdiction in waging a successful land campaign. This lack of doctrine and guidance is reflected in the systems the Navy now employs for deep-attack operations. In a conventional carrier wing of eighty-six aircraft, only twenty A-6E medium-attack aircraft have such a capability. This fact may explain why, according to General Colin L. Powell, Chairman of the JCS, "only 17 percent of the air available came from the Navy" during Desert Storm.[46] Yet even "this effort required six of the Navy's 14 deployable aircraft carriers positioned in waters previously considered too dangerous for carrier operations."[47] Obviously, much more than simple sortie generation numbers are needed to determine true combat effectiveness, but these contentious statistics do highlight a likely problem area.

Command arrangements for this type of contingency operation must also be addressed through naval doctrine. Prior to Desert Storm, "the Navy's position that carrier-based air power should not be controlled by a functional air component commander had been expressed numerous times and had posed a serious problem in the conduct of operations in both Korea and Southeast

Asia."[48] The Gulf War vividly highlighted the need for doctrine to define the command arrangements necessary to integrate the employment of carrier and land-based aircraft in support of a theater-wide campaign.[49]

These problems could be resolved by codifying a naval doctrine that clearly provides official guidelines on how best to employ a force of carriers and their medium-attack aircraft in an operational campaign. Unless it does so, the Navy will continue to stand out as one of the factors inhibiting the development of joint doctrine and the effectiveness of each armed service.

Growing Naval Importance. Maritime forces have played a historic role in maintaining a global balance of power. This role, by necessity, will expand in the future. As the United States relies less on manned bombers and multiple-warhead strategic missiles, maritime forces must play an increasingly important role in both strategic nuclear and conventional deterrence. Consequently, "instead of simply concentrating on maritime missions, in this new era, the Navy should, indeed must, focus on national missions."[50] As one Marine colonel stated, "our dual track thinking in terms of distinct maritime and land theaters must change. The ranges, lethality, and accuracy of both sea-based and land-based systems have reduced 'pure' maritime and land theaters to almost theoretical concepts. It is impossible to separate the two, and the separation associated strictly with the types of forces employed (naval and ground) is artificial at best."[51]

This same conclusion drove the U.S. Air Force to combine its Strategic and Tactical Air Commands into one new Air Combat Command last June. By abolishing the strategic and tactical distinctions that pre-date even the formation of the Air Force, that service is rethinking and reorganizing to provide greater combat capability quickly and efficiently to the theater commander. The Navy must likewise "get on board" and dismiss these artificial separations. The critical part Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles (TLAMs) played throughout Desert Storm illustrates this merging of naval strategic and tactical capabilities.

Every aspect of American military forces must be reassessed to find new and better ways of integrating and employing weapons, people, and technology to focus on strategic—not land, sea, or air—objectives. Without this fundamental reassessment, even new weapons and technology, traditionally America's strong suits, will give little advantage. We must keep in mind that "superiority in weapons stems not only from advancing technology, but also from relating the technology selected to doctrine of tactical or strategic application."[52] As Marine General George B. Crist, former commander of Central Command, has explained, "the U.S. Navy is well equipped with the hi-tech weaponry to wage combat against the Soviet Union; it is not so adequately prepared to deal with Third World contingencies."[53] Correcting the problem, he concluded, "will take a shift from the Admirals' fixation with forward-deployed carrier battle

groups and the maritime strategy to the more mundane missions of controlling sea-lanes, moving troops and providing naval gunfire and tactical air support to amphibious operations."[54] Although his statement may be somewhat contentious, General Crist does highlight the need for fundamental analysis and open-minded thinking. Only doctrine can provide the sound framework necessary for every such reassessment of missions, capabilities, and future naval warfare.

Doctrine provides a necessary foundation for each of our services. The Army has demonstrated how to use doctrine properly to organize, train, equip, and employ forces. To date, the Navy has not recognized the importance of such a foundation and, consequently, has no official doctrine. Realistically, there are a number of good reasons why it has not done so, and as Admiral Strasser points out, the Navy actually does have many elements of doctrine—it just has an aversion to labeling them as such.

The Maritime Strategy has often been compared to doctrine, but in actuality, it does not meet any of the traditional definitions. It served the Navy well in the 1980s, but it cannot meet current and future maritime challenges. While it embodied many of the Navy's fundamental principles, they must now be extracted, reassessed, and codified into a single, official doctrine for the Navy of the twenty-first century. Without such a doctrine, the Navy will be unable to address effectively problems identified in Desert Storm, such as integrating and employing naval forces in joint and theater-wide operations, and the ineffectiveness of dealing with Third World contingencies using Cold War assumptions and approaches. Change is forcing the Navy to play a greater role in deterrence and warfare, and doctrine is the only means to meet those challenges efficiently.

Such a doctrine must become the fighting foundation for every sailor, airman, and soldier connected with American maritime power. It should be the basis for how the Navy plans to fight (when and if it does), how it will train, and how it will structure and build future forces and equipment. It must be realistic, understandable, and useful. Most importantly, it must become the core of naval combat philosophy, "acting as a unifying thought process without producing predictable thoughts."[55]

Obviously, developing an official doctrine will be an extremely tough challenge, but not one that the most powerful and professional navy in the world cannot take on, full speed ahead. Only open-mindedness, innovativeness, and a great deal of leadership can make it happen.

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Ψ

No servitude is more hopeless than that of unintelligent submission to an idea formally correct, yet incomplete. It has all the vicious misleading of a half-truth unqualified by appreciation of modifying conditions; and so seamen who disdained theories, and hugged the belief in themselves as "practical," became doctrinaires in the worst sense.

Alfred Thayer Mahan
Types of Naval Officers, 1901

"You don't see yet, Genry, why we perfected and practice Foretelling?"
"No—"
"To exhibit the perfect uselessness of knowing the answer to the wrong question."

Ursula K. Le Guin
The Left Hand of Darkness, 1969